

Project ACHIEVE

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Program developers or their agents provided the Model Program information below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Project ACHIEVE is a school-based, school reform/improvement program that focuses on the academic, school safety and positive climate, and parent involvement outcomes consistent with the No Child Left Behind legislation. It uses evidence-based strategies, professional development, and technical consultation services and approaches to target and reinforce critical staff skills and intervention approaches for an entire school as related to student outcomes. Project ACHIEVE is used primarily in preschool, elementary, and middle schools, with students 3 to 14 years of age, although it also has been adapted and used with middle and high school alternative school programs, regular high schools, and special education centers. Regardless of its setting, Project ACHIEVE places emphasis on increasing student performance in areas of social skills and social-emotional-behavioral development, conflict resolution and self-management, achievement and academic progress, and positive school climate and safe school practices. It focuses on a continuum of student services from prevention to strategic intervention to crisis management. Project ACHIEVE has seven components, and implementation is carefully sequenced over a 3-year period.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Project ACHIEVE, developed by Dr. Howard Knoff at the University of South Florida, began as a district-wide training program for school psychologists, guidance counselors, social workers, and elementary-level instructional consultants. It is now a school-based improvement, professional development, and technical consultation program that targets and reinforces critical staff skills and intervention approaches for an entire school. Since 1990, Project ACHIEVE has been implemented in schools and school districts across the country. To date, almost 1,500 schools in more than 40 States have been trained in one or more of its components.



RECOGNITION

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Model Program

White House Conference on School Safety: Exemplary Program

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, American: Effective School Reform Program
American Institutes for Research

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional: Model Program Learning (CASEL)

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE CLASSIFICATION (IOM)

UNIVERSAL, SELECTIVE

Developed for use in all schools, including those that are low performing and that serve children at risk for social, emotional and behavioral problems, and underachieving students.

INTERVENTION TYPE

SCHOOL-BASED

CONTENT FOCUS

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, ANTISOCIAL/AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE, VIOLENCE, DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS SUBSTANCES, OTHER: WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM

This program targets risk factors related to substance use and abuse but does not specifically address substance use.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Implements schoolwide academic prevention programs that focus on the needs of all students along with strategic intervention programs for underachieving students, including multifaceted “wraparound” programs for students with intensive special education and other needs.

PARENT COMPONENT

The Parent Training, Tutoring and Support Component focuses on the development of ongoing home-school collaboration by making parents an integral part of the planning and activities of the school; helping parents understand teachers’ expectations of their children and increase support of their children’s development; and increasing parent-to-parent communication and parent-to-teacher collaboration.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

Utilizing the Stop & Think Social Skills Program, Project ACHIEVE’s curriculum for teaching students appropriate behavior and self-management skills, schools develop and implement a schoolwide positive behavioral discipline approach that enhances academic engagement, positive school climate, and total school safety.

ANTISOCIAL/AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR; VIOLENCE

Includes a social skills, behavioral consultation and behavioral intervention component to help address situations including “special situation” analyses, crisis prevention and intervention procedures, and crisis team development.

OTHER: WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM

The program works to improve the planning and organizational effectiveness of school and staff; the use of successful classroom, instruction, and other school processes; and the implementation of schoolwide positive behavioral and academic prevention programs.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, SCHOOL

INDIVIDUAL

- Positive sense of self
- Belief in society’s values
- Prosocial behavior and conflict resolution skills
- Communication and problem-solving skills
- Responsiveness, empathy, and caring
- Goal-directedness and self-discipline
- Cooperation and flexibility
- Strengthened commitment to school

FAMILY

- Avoidance of severe criticism
- High but realistic parental expectations
- Clear and consistent expectations
- Emotionally supportive family environment
- Orderly and structured parent-child relationships
- Parent involvement in homework and school-related activities

SCHOOL

- Caring and supportive environment
- Sense of community in classroom and school
- Reinforced high expectations from school personnel
- Clear standards and rules for appropriate behavior

RISK FACTORS

INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, PEER, SCHOOL

INDIVIDUAL

- Lack of self-control, assertiveness, and other social and emotional skills
- Low self-esteem and self-confidence
- Emotional and psychological problems
- School failure
- Conduct problems and early antisocial behavior (e.g., lying, stealing, aggression)
- Economic disadvantage

FAMILY

- Poor child supervision and discipline
- Unrealistic expectations for development

PEER

- Susceptibility to negative peer pressure
- Need to respond to peer teasing, taunting, and bullying

SCHOOL

- Poor school performance and high absenteeism
- Ambiguous, lax, or inconsistent rules and sanctions for student behavior
- Harsh, arbitrary, or disproportionate student management practices
- Poor sense of community in school
- Lack of parental involvement in schooling

INTERVENTIONS BY DOMAIN

INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, PEER, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY

INDIVIDUAL

- Life/social skills training

FAMILY

- Parent education/parenting skills training

PEER

- Peer-resistance education

SCHOOL

- Classroom drug education
- Classroom-based skills development
- Comprehensive school change programs including components to improve parent involvement, change classroom management and/or instructional style, and improve student participation and school bonding

COMMUNITY

- Multi-agency activities and collaboration

KEY PROGRAM APPROACHES

IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA, PARENT TRAINING, SKILL DEVELOPMENT,
OTHER: SCHOOLWIDE REFORM

IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is a curriculum for teaching students appropriate social and self-management skills. Specific social skills are taught for each age group, using role modeling and role-play, as well as application and infusion strategies. The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is the foundation to the project's positive behavioral self-management and school safety approach.

PARENT TRAINING

The Parent Training, Tutoring and Support Component focuses on the development of ongoing home-school collaboration by making parents an integral part of the planning and activities of the school; helping parents understand teachers' expectations of their children and increase support of their children's development; and increasing parent-to-parent communication and parent-to-teacher collaboration. This component also includes outreach activities whereby parents can be taught the Stop & Think Social Skills Program (using the Parent videotape), and other behavioral management skills for their use at home.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

At the school level, staff increase their skills in strategic planning, group and team processes, data-based problem solving, effective instructional and behavioral interventions, and student and parent engagement. For students, the program enhances their academic engagement and academic skills, along with their interpersonal, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and social and behavior management skills. Basic social skills (there are 10 core and 10 advanced skills at each curricular level) include listening, following directions, asking for help, ignoring distractions, and responding to teasing.

OTHER: SCHOOLWIDE REFORM

The overall desired outcome of Project ACHIEVE is school reform and/or school improvement, so that the entire operation of the school supports the social and academic development of children more effectively. In addition to the parent training described above, it contains other components that address and strengthen strategic planning, teacher training preparation, problem-solving approaches, classroom instruction, and school safety and accountability.

HOW IT WORKS:

Project ACHIEVE is implemented by following a series of carefully sequenced steps that generally occur over a 3-year period. The program uses professional development, inservice, and technical assistance to train school personnel at each facility. Successful replication of the Project ACHIEVE model involves seven interdependent components:

- 1) **Strategic Planning and Organizational Analysis and Development** analyzes the facility's operations and recommends specific program objectives and action plans and coordinates meaningful evaluation procedures.
- 2) **Referral Question Consultation Problem-Solving Process (RQC)** uses a systematic, functional, problem-solving process to explain why student problems are occurring and link assessment to interventions that help students progress.
- 3) **Effective Classroom and School Processes/Staff Development** focuses on developing and reinforcing teachers' classroom behaviors and school processes that maximize students' academic engagement and learning.
- 4) **Instructional Consultation and Curriculum-Based Assessment and Intervention** involves the functional assessment of referred students' learning problems. It evaluates their response to and success with the curriculum and coordinates the instruction and interventions needed to teach them to master necessary academic skills.
- 5) **Social Skills, Behavioral Consultation, and Behavioral Interventions** facilitate implementation of effective interventions that address students' curricular and behavioral problems, including "special situation" analyses, crisis prevention and intervention procedures, and team development.
- 6) **Parent Training, Tutoring, and Support** develop ongoing home-school collaboration, including the assessment, coordination, and use of community resources.
- 7) **Research, Data Management, and Accountability** reinforce the collection of formative and summative outcome data (including consumer satisfaction and time- and cost-effectiveness data) to validate various aspects of a schoolwide improvement process.

The **Stop & Think Social Skills Program** is Project ACHIEVE's curriculum for teaching students appropriate behavior and self-management skills. It includes the *Social Skills* book and support materials that allow teachers to organize and implement a social skills program. The *RQC Workbook*, which describes the problem-solving and strategic intervention approach and provides step-by-step training and examples of how to use it with individually referred students, is also available. Using these materials, Project ACHIEVE is best installed in this sequence:

- **Year 1** activities involve Social Skills training; RQC problem-solving training; and providing teachers with release time for planning, meetings, and technical assistance.
- **Year 2** activities include Social Skills/RQC training and booster sessions, Behavioral Observation and Instructional Environment Assessment training; Curriculum-Based Assessment and Measurement (CBA/CBM) training; and release time for planning, meetings, and technical assistance.
- **Year 3** implementation requires booster sessions in all prior components; parent involvement planning, training, and facilitation; grade-level intervention planning and implementation; and release time for planning, meetings, and technical assistance.

Beyond Year 3, Project ACHIEVE schools provide approximately 1 day per month of release time for teachers to plan and implement the activities identified in their action plans.

Other Project ACHIEVE materials are provided during professional development workshops as different components of the project are implemented. Training and technical assistance are available and supported through public and private funding.

Project ACHIEVE can be implemented with the staff and resources available in most schools, especially when there are a large number of special or Title I students referred to and/or already in an existing program. In addition to current staff, it is recommended that school districts identify one project coordinator for every three to five project buildings during the first 3 years of implementation and for every five to eight buildings thereafter.

OUTCOMES

REDUCTIONS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO RISK FACTORS, IMPROVEMENTS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Project ACHIEVE has consistent longitudinal data from several schools that have used Project ACHIEVE over 5- to 10-year periods. This information is available on the Project ACHIEVE Web site: www.coedu.usf.edu/projectachieve (as of 7/1/03: www.stopthinkachieve.com; www.stopandthink.info, stopandthinksocialskills.com).

REDUCTIONS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO RISK FACTORS

In general, most project sites also see decreases in discipline problems referred to the principal's office, student suspensions and expulsions, and the number of students referred to and placed in special education classes. The sites also see increases in positive school climate, increased use of data-based problem solving, and strategic academic and behavioral interventions.

- Overall discipline referrals to the principal decreased 16%
- Out-of-school suspensions decreased 29%
- Grade retentions decreased 47%
- Special education referrals decreased 61%
- School bus discipline referrals to the office decreased 26%
- Special Education placements decreased 33%

**Comparison of prior-year data from one of many studied schools with the data averages after 8 years of program implementation at the same school.*

IMPROVEMENTS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Data from the initial evaluation study, comparing one project school with one control school, showed the reduced behavioral problems and other outcomes noted above. In addition, a comparison of prior-year data with the averages from 8 years of Project ACHIEVE implementation at this same project school showed the following academic gains on the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) test:

Reading CTBS: 33 percent of the full project cohort students scored at or above the 50th percentile compared to 29 percent of the partial project cohort.

Math CTBS: 40 percent of the full project cohort students scored at or above the 50th percentile compared to 36 percent of the partial project cohort students.

Language CTBS: 41 percent of the full project cohort students scored at or above the 50th percentile compared to 36 percent of the partial project cohort students.

OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

Benefits

This program helps to—

- Maximize student academic achievement
 - Create safe and positive school climates
 - Increase and sustain effective classroom instruction
 - Increase and sustain strong parent-school involvement
 - Teach students social skills and self-management behavior
-

EVALUATION DESIGN

While validated at numerous individual sites, Project ACHIEVE has undergone one published, referred evaluation with a quasi-experimental design at the elementary school level. This 1990 to 1998 evaluation used a matched-comparison design, with one treatment and one control school. In choosing a comparison school, researchers used school demographics, giving the most weight to the percentage of students on the Federal free-lunch program. Project ACHIEVE was implemented over a 3-year period. Data were collected in the treatment school during 4 academic years and during 1 academic year in the comparison school. Additional longitudinal analyses, at three school sites, were completed using a multiple baseline design across numerous variables, with each school used as its own internal control.

The American Institutes for Research also performed an independent analysis of Project ACHIEVE for the U.S. Department of Education using a team of national experts who conducted a 2-day onsite evaluation of two school sites. The predominant methodology for this evaluation entailed a structured interview-based qualitative analysis that collected data from students, parents, staff, school and district administrators, community members, and agency representatives.

DELIVERY SPECIFICATIONS

1–3 YEARS, 3–6 YEARS

Amount of time required to deliver the program to obtain documented outcomes:

The program is delivered over 3 years as part of a flexible blueprint that is individualized to the particular strengths and weaknesses of a school.

Year One activities involve Organizational Analysis and Strategic Planning, Social Skills and School Safety training, the Referral Question Consultation (functional assessment and data-based) problem-solving training, and providing teachers with release time for planning, meetings, and technical assistance.

Year Two activities include advanced Social Skills and Referral Question Consultation training and booster sessions, Behavioral Observation and Instructional Environment Assessment training, Advanced Behavioral Interventions training, Curriculum-Based Assessment and Measurement/Instructional Consultation training, and continuing to provide release time.

Year Three implementation requires booster sessions in all prior components; parent involvement planning; training and facilitation; grade-level intervention planning and implementation; strategic self-management training; and continued release time.

Beyond Year Three, Project ACHIEVE schools provide approximately 1 day per month of release time for teachers to plan and implement activities.

The Stop and Think Social Skills Program is taught at four grade/cluster levels (preschool to grade 1, grades 2 to 3, grades 4 to 5, and grades 6 to 8). Ten to 15 skills typically are taught each year. Each skill is generally taught over a 2 week period involving three 20- to 30-minute lessons, 3 to 4 days of application, and 3 to 4 days of classroom infusion, as appropriate for the age group.

INTENDED SETTING

RURAL, URBAN, SUBURBAN, TRIBAL RESERVATION

Developed for use in urban, rural, and suburban settings.

Project ACHIEVE has also been used in a number of American Indian and Bureau of Indian Affairs schools.

FIDELITY

Components that must be included in order to achieve the same outcomes as those cited in the developer:

Project ACHIEVE should be implemented using the 3-year blueprint described above, using the Stop and Think School Skills curriculum and implementing all seven components. However, many schools implement only the Social Skills, Behavioral Consultation and Behavioral Interventions; and/or the Referral Question Consultation Problem Solving Process component, with excellent outcomes in these areas.

Optional components or strategies and how they were determined to be optional:

The program has been implemented in a number of settings using only one or more selected components when outcomes in those specific areas were desired.

BARRIERS AND PROBLEMS

Project ACHIEVE is based on a recognition that building-wide change often takes from 3 to 5 years to accomplish. Before a Project ACHIEVE partnership begins, a school applies to be involved. Typically, a building must demonstrate its organizational and motivational (with at least 80 percent of the staff voting to participate) readiness to engage in the Project ACHIEVE process. This minimizes significant key problems. Other problems are handled through the strategic planning and database evaluation processes.

PERSONNEL

FULL TIME, PAID

The program can be implemented with the staff and resources available in most schools.

In addition, when there are multiple Project ACHIEVE buildings in a single district, it is recommended that school districts identify one Project Coordinator for every three to five project buildings during the first 3 years of implementation, and for every five to eight buildings thereafter. For these districts, Training of Trainers options also are available.

EDUCATION

UNDERGRADUATE

Primarily, teachers and other specialized school personnel deliver the program, though everyone in the school, regardless of position (e.g., custodians, food service workers, etc.) or education, is involved.

PERSONNEL TRAINING

Type: CLASSROOM, **Location:** ONSITE (user), **Length:** BASIC

Specific training for implementing Project ACHIEVE does not occur separately from the implementation process, which includes teachers, other school staff, and parents. All Project ACHIEVE training is done at the school site with all of the school staff participating. Some training involves the entire staff, whereas other training focuses on select teams or groups of building professionals. Training typically involves in-service training, classroom-based demonstrations, technical consultation and followup, and training for independent practice. A Training of Trainers option is available for select Project ACHIEVE components.

Project ACHIEVE has a number of school sites around the country than can be visited to observe and discuss Project ACHIEVE in action.

COST (estimated in U.S. dollars)

\$5,001–10,000

Cost considerations for implementing this program as recommended by the developer:

250 STUDENTS AND 20 STAFF OVER 1 YEAR

Budget costs should include Project Coordinator, training, equipment, materials and supplies, in-service stipends, and substitute teachers (when teachers are on release time or at training or attending other out-of-classroom requirements).

TRAINING COSTS

Training and consultation/technical assistance costs may involve up to 10 to 15 days for the first 3 years. These costs will decrease over time, and may be offset by combining these costs with other resources already available to the school system.

For the Social Skills, Behavioral Consultation, and Behavioral Interventions component a minimum of 2 days of building-wide training and 1 day of technical consultation (spread over a 2-month period) is required, although 5 total days of consultation are recommended \$1,500 per day, plus expenses

MATERIALS

Classroom package of “Stop and Think” materials for each age group: Social Skills teacher manual, reproducible forms booklet, skill cards for all students, posters, large and small “Stop and Think” signs \$125

Teacher manuals and reproducible forms book only \$69
Classroom materials sold separately in sets of five

Parent Training Video \$45.95

Sets of support materials sold separately in packages of five and more (charms, stickers, magnets, memo pads, pencils, pins, signs, self inking stamps, and T-shirts) \$15–\$22.50

INTENDED AGE GROUP

EARLY CHILDHOOD (0–4), CHILDHOOD (5–11), EARLY ADOLESCENT (12–14)

This program was developed for use in preschool, kindergarten, elementary, and middle schools, with children 3 to 14 years of age.

INTENDED POPULATION

AFRICAN AMERICAN, ASIAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC/LATINO,
AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE, WHITE

This program has been delivered to diverse racial and ethnic populations, including African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and White.

GENDER FOCUS

BOTH GENDERS

This program was developed for use with both male and female students.

REPLICATION INFORMATION

CONTACT INFORMATION, DELIVERY LOCATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

One or more of the components of Project ACHIEVE have been implemented in almost 1,500 schools in more than 40 States.

Schools and school districts that have implemented the program include:

Jesse Keen Elementary School (and other schools), Lakeland, FL

Hillsborough County School District, Tampa, FL

Cleveland Elementary School, Hillsborough County, Tampa, FL

The Alaska Department of Education and the Alaska School Psychology Association

Hotchkiss Elementary School (and other schools) in Dallas Independent School District, TX

MacDonald Intermediate School, the Department of Defense School System, Ft. Knox, KY

Montgomery County School District, MD (select schools)

Washington, D.C. public schools (select schools)

Cobb County School District, GA (select schools)

Little Rock City School District, AR (select schools)

Katy Independent School District, TX (select schools)

San Francisco Unified School District, CA (select schools)

Wyoming Indian Elementary School, Ethete, WY

Complete project descriptions and contact information for each of these schools/organizations are available at the Web site:
www.coedu.usf.edu/projectachieve/SchoolsinProject (as of 7/1/03:
www.stopthinkachieve.com; www.stopandthink.info; stopandthinksocialskills.com).

DELIVERY LOCATIONS

Additional intervention sites for which the Model Program was implemented:

As noted, Project ACHIEVE has been used in high schools, alternative schools, psychiatric and juvenile justice facilities, Head Start, and specialized charter schools.

CONTACT INFORMATION

ABOUT THE DEVELOPER

Howard M. Knoff, Ph.D.

Dr. Knoff is a professor of school psychology at the University of South Florida (Tampa, FL), and was director of the school psychology program there for 12 years. He is currently director of the Institute for School Reform, Integrated Services, and Child Mental Health and Educational Policy. He received his Ph.D. from Syracuse University in 1980 and has worked as a practitioner, consultant, licensed private psychologist, and university professor since 1978. Known for his research and writing on organizational change and school reform, consultation and intervention processes, social skills and behavior management training, personality assessment, and various professional issues, Dr. Knoff has published more than 75 articles and book chapters and delivered more than 300 papers and workshops. He was the 21st president of the National Association of School Psychologists.

FOR INFORMATION (AND THE REFERRAL QUESTION CONSULTATION PROCESS)

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FOR STOP AND THINK MATERIALS

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